



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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April 15, 2003
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Bloechle, Curry, Fox, Grone, Ham, Hoell (substitute for Kolb), Hultine, Jelinek, Littlebeaver, Lloyd, Nolan Brown, Rasmussen, Schultz, Shepard, Vavrina

Absent: Berger, Christensen, Gieschen, Sorensen

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of Agenda

Don noted that B. under Old Business is a misprint and should read Work Incentives. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Nolan Brown and seconded by Vavrina. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2003

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Hultine and seconded by Rasmussen, Motion passed.

IV. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1. **State Funding** – The Governor's office and Appropriations Committee is still recommending approximately a 7.5% cut for Voc Rehab. The Appropriations Committee initially recommended an 11.3%, but will probably go with the recommendation in the Governor's budget.
2. **Transition Planner** – VR staff have been distributing the planner to schools working with the schools to develop a written agreement between VR and the schools to identify the expectations for how VR and the schools will work together. Jack indicated that the schools, teachers, and parents feel the publication does a good job of explaining Voc Rehab's role in the school and provides a uniform consistent message statewide. Special Education has agreed to pay for the cost of additional printing of the publication. Once the publication has been reprinted it will be distributed to all special education teachers.

3. **Hastings/Grand Island office** – These two VR offices are combining into once office location in Grand Island sometime between July 1 and August 1, 2003. The new office has been reconfigured and Frank discussed the new floor plan with the council. The overall space will be reduced by approximately 37%. The new space is very open, and staff are set up around the open area so they can see consumers working and planning and provide help when needed. The plan includes a conference room and several private offices that can be used for initial interviews or private planning with consumers. The cost savings for combining the offices will be approximately \$50,000.00 per year. VR will have itinerate office space in Hastings at locations such as Central Community College, Goodwill, ESU, and the Regional Center.

V. Old Business

A. IPE Workbook Presentation (*Dennis King, Janet Drudik*)

Dennis King and Janet Drudik attended the meeting to provide the council with information regarding the Front End Process. A handout (Establishing the Relationship) was distributed which identifies the steps that are taken during the Front End Process (from the time a consumer makes contact with VR to the time their IPE is developed).

The Powerpoint presentation that is provided to the consumer by a specialist that explains the process they will use to develop their IPE was shown to the council. The new front end process has been used in the Norfolk office for approximately a year and in the Omaha office for about 4 months.

Once the consumer has made the decision to continue with VR, the specialist spends time with the consumer discussing their next steps. A handout (Planning for Employment) is then distributed to the consumer to help them determine their next steps in achieving their job goal. From the Planning for Employment handout the consumer is able to identify those sections of the notebook that they need to complete to help them achieve their employment goal. The Self Employment books are then customized to include only those sections they have identified.

The consumer has the option of completing the information in the Self Exploration notebook in the VR office on their own or with the assistance of a VR specialist. They also have the option of taking it home and completing it with a family member.

Janet reviewed sections of the Self Exploration notebook with the council, including the Personal Profile handout and how it is used. The Personal Profile is used as they complete the notebook to identify their priorities in each section of the notebook.

B. Work Incentives Review (*Dennis King*)

Due to time constraints, this agenda item will be discussed at the next meeting.

C. Feedback from Letter to Appropriation Committee (*Sue Gieschen*)

Council members discussed whether the letters of support sent by the council had any impact in decreasing the 11.3% cut recommended by the Appropriation's Committee to the 7.5% cut recommended by the Governor. Council members indicated that they had not had any feedback.

D. PILS JAM in Chadron (*Sue Gieschen*)

Sue was not available to discuss this issue.

VI. Reports

A. Committee Reports

Client Service Delivery – Ham distributed draft letters the committee developed for use during different phases of contact during the Employment Warranty (EW) period of a consumer's case. The committee developed these letters using the language currently used by VR offices to make contact with a consumer in EW. The letters are offered as suggestions and staff will be encouraged to individualize and personalize them for their consumers.

A motion was made by Vavrina and seconded by Littlebeaver that the council accept the letters as drafted. Motion passed.

Ham will provide Don with copies of the final letters and Don will meet with Frank and Margy to determine how the information will be communicated to staff.

Interagency/Outreach – Curry distributed a summary of the results of the Customer Relations Survey that they distributed. There has been a 40% return on the survey. The committee will provide an update of numbers from any additional surveys and a list of comments that were on the surveys to the council at the next meeting. The committee will be reviewing the surveys and making recommendations to the council based on the results.

B. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Vicki reviewed some of the cases outlined in the CAP report that was distributed prior to the meeting. Council members observed that the CAP report seemed to have a lot of activity and Vicki answered questions related to some of the cases. A copy of the written report will be distributed to council members.

During the second week in May, Gerri Harris the regional CAP representative and Carole , the federal CAP representative will be conducting an on-site review. They will spend approximately 2 1/2 days visiting with Sue Gieschen, SRC chairperson, Tim Shaw with NE Advocacy, Frank Lloyd/Margy Hoffman with Voc Rehab, Mike Schafer with the League of Human Dignity, Pearl Van Zandt with the NE Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and approximately 6 consumers. This will also include a financial review.

C. SILC Report (*Tim Kolb*)

Kathy Hoell, SILC chairperson attended the SRC meeting as a substitute for Tim Kolb. Hoell reported that the SILC is signing a lease to open a SILC office and hire an Executive Director. The Advocacy Committee has been working for Senator Jensen to discuss issues related to institutional biases that the SILC believes prevails in some agencies. The SILC will be participating in the upcoming Assistive Technology conference.

D. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

Registration information is available for the AbilityQuest conference scheduled for May 7-9, 2003.

Installation of equipment has been completed at seven of the one stop. Seven more MOU's are in place and equipment will be installed and training provided at these locations by the end of the month. Installation at the rest of the 21 one stop sites will be completed by the end of May. At least one individual will be trained at each site on how to use the equipment.

VII. New Business

A. State Plan and Policy Issues (*Don Crouch*)

1. Public Forum Input
2. Approve State Plan

At each council meeting, VR asks the council for their input regarding issues and policies. The VR State Plan is being submitted next month and this will be the last opportunity for the council to provide input for the state plan. At the last council meeting, VR distributed the three questions that were to be discussed at the state plan public forums. Don reviewed these questions with the council.

VR is considering two different options: 1) continue helping the same number of individuals but limit the financial assistance; or 2) continue providing the same level of financial assistance but serve fewer people. Financial assistance would be limited through revisions to Rule 72, VR's cost containment guidelines.

The council inquired as to whether the cost of post-secondary training has increased over the past few years. Those costs have continued to rise. Frank indicated that VR has a 10% increase built into Rule 72 to address additional increases in post secondary costs, but this will not cover the increases that are being passed on to students by the budget cuts.

B. Proposed Rule 72 Changes (*Don Crouch*)

Proposed changes to Rule 72 were distributed to the council prior to the meeting. Don reviewed the proposed changes with the council. Input related to the proposed changes must be received by April 25, 2003.

1. Appendix C – This appendix identifies specific services VR will pay for and the sets limits on the amount that VR will pay for these services.
2. Supported Employment Fees, Appendix D – This appendix describes the financial incentives available to supported employment providers when they provide assistance in helping a person get a job. The fee schedule identifies financial incentives at the time they place a consumer, and then additional financial incentives at various milestones associated with the length of time the person continues to be employed. An additional milestone was added to the fee schedule with financial incentives associated with it.
3. Service Procurement – This section identifies consumer's choices for procuring goods or services. The options are 1) provide an allowance to the consumer and have them purchase the goods and services themselves. This is currently being done with post-secondary training; 2) reimbursement – VR agrees upon the good or service, the client purchases it, and then brings in a receipt and is reimbursed for the expense; 3) program purchase – VR buys the good or service for the client directly from a vendor. The intent is to try to provide more choices to the consumer.
4. Financial Participation, Appendix A – This appendix contains a chart that determines whether a person has enough income or assets to pay for goods or services they need. Don explained to the council how income and assets would be taken into consideration in determining if any contribution would be required. The intent is that if a person has substantial income or resource, they would be required to contribute to their plan.

5. Small Business – A few years ago VR implemented a new self-employment program for consumers interested in starting their own business. Based on past experiences, VR is recommending two changes to the section related to small businesses: 1) require the individual to own at least 51% of the business before they can help; 2) delete the requirement that limits the amount VR can contribute to 20% of the start up costs and just leave the amount that VR can contribute at the current cap of \$5,000.00.
6. Homemaker outcome – Language in the Rehab Act no longer includes homemaker as an employment outcome. VR would like to make the language in Rule 72 consistent with the language in the Rehab Act and delete homemaker from their definition of employment outcome.

Council input on proposed changes to Rule 72:

- * In Appendix C add a description of I.L. Supplies. The agency agrees and will do this.
- * Add more flexibility in how on OJT is funded in Appendix C. The agency agrees and will do this.
- * Add business liability insurance to 010.01B4. The agency agrees and will do this.
- * Do not require financial contribution by clients in the purchase of worksite modifications. The agency agrees and will do this.
- * Increase the fees for training post-secondary college in Appendix C. The agency did not agree to do this. The fees proposed are a 10% increase over the fees allowed in the current rule. Faced with the impending budget cuts the agency feels it cannot raise these further.

Council members are encouraged to review the many changes that have been proposed in Appendix C and send any additional recommendations or comments to Frank before April 25, 2003. VR noted that section 3.04 allows for the Area Administrator to make an exception to any of the financial participation guidelines.

C. Workforce Investment Reauthorization (*Frank Lloyd*)

Frank distributed a summary from the CSAVR State Administrators Association regarding proposed changes to the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The main concern continues to be the provision of funds to cover costs associated with the resource centers. The resource rooms provide for the exchange of labor market information to the general public which is a responsibility of the Department of Labor. Voc Rehab is an eligibility program which funds services for people with disabilities, not services available to the general public. People with disabilities have a right to basic labor market information without VR having to pay the costs associated with it. This core service should not be paid for by VR because it is a service provided to the general public. The Commissioners' of Education and Labor sent a letter to the federal Departments of Education and Labor for their input in resolving this issue. Both federal departments responded that those questions would be addressed in the reauthorization of WIA.

The language in the reauthorization suggest that the money would be sent to the governors of each state, and the governors would decide how much money from each program would be allocated to pay for these services. CSAVR is opposed to this language, as is many disability groups. The long-term effect would be that once the money designated for people with disabilities starts going to provide services for the general public, people with disabilities will lose the advocacy that surrounds that money and the specialized services that money provides.

The intent of the one stop centers is to serve employers and to get employers the best employee they can. The focus of the VR program is to get the consumer the best job possible. NE VR will continue to advocate that VR is an eligibility program and does not pay for services that are available to the general public.

D. Meeting Dates for FY04

These dates will be set at the next meeting on August 19, 2003.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Littlebeaver and seconded by Curry. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting (*August 19, 2003*)

How is VR dealing with new HIPA regulations?

Work Incentives/Red Book (*Dennis King*)

IPE Workbook Presentation Step 2 (2 hours) (*Dennis King, Janet Drudik*)

Set Meeting Dates for FY04

Election of Officers